TOEBI Newsletter
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Teachers of Old English in Britain and Ireland

TOEBI aims to promote and support the teaching of Old English in British and Irish Universities, and to raise the profile of the Old English language, Old English literature and Anglo-Saxon England in the public eye.

Membership

TOEBI welcomes new members. If you have any questions regarding membership, please contact the Secretary, Dr Marilina Cesario, m.cesario@qub.ac.uk

Meeting

The next TOEBI meeting (on the theme 'Values') will be held at Trinity College Dublin on Saturday 10th October 2015. Please contact the meeting organiser, Dr Alice Jorgensen, for further information: jorgena@tcd.ie

Conference Awards

TOEBI regularly awards bursaries to help postgraduate students attend conferences. The application deadline for the awards competition of the academic year 2015-2016 will be in the spring of 2016. For further details please contact the Awards Officer, Dr Alice Jorgensen, jorgena@tcd.ie

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Report on pedagogic research project

Creative translation

What happens when undergraduate students of Old English are asked not simply to translate early medieval poetry or to read modern translations of it, but to produce creative, poetic reworkings of their own? Dr Helen Brookman (KCL) and Dr Olivia Robinson (Oxford) are exploring the benefits of students engaging in 'creative translation' activities in the learning of Old English language and literature in a pedagogic research project, funded by the Humanities Division at the University of Oxford.

A creative translation activity asks students to inhabit and understand medieval poetic texts by producing creative, free modern versions, assisted by customised resources, that respond to the content, form, style, and sound of the source text. We are evaluating whether this approach helps first-year students with varying levels of linguistic knowledge to engage with and develop increased enthusiasm for the difficult and unfamiliar material and to rise to the challenges of learning to interpret literary texts in their original languages.

Project overview

As researchers, we share an interest in translation and adaptation. At the time the project began, we were both teaching at Oxford colleges, where Old English was effectively compulsory for first-year students. The idea for the creative activity arose from a series of lectures we co-delivered for the Faculty of English at the University of Oxford in 2013 and 2014 on 'Translation and the Early Medieval Text'. In this interactive series, we explored translation (intra- and post-medieval) as a

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generative literary activity with first-year students. They engaged enthusiastically with the texts and ideas we discussed.

These lively discussions seemed very different from the language and translation classes that we both taught for first-year students in our respective colleges, where students were often reluctant or unsure how to engage with the required language learning and literal translation homework.[1] Even though they were also engaging in the usual learning and assessment activities (writing essays, participating in tutorials), it would often be late in the academic year when students felt able to treat *The Wanderer* or *The Dream of the Rood* as literary texts to be analysed and enjoyed, as they would a novel or play.

Would introducing formative creative translation activities, where students were given heavily glossed texts and then afforded creative agency to produce their own versions, alongside reading modern poetic translations (e.g. Simon Armitage's *Deor*, published in *The London Review of Books*, vol. 35.4, 21st February 2013), articles about poetic translation of Old English poetry (e.g. Michael Alexander, 'Old English Poetry into Modern English Verse', *Translation and Literature* 3 [1994], 69-75), and writing reflectively and engaging in group discussions about their own creations, help the students see their set texts as poetic creations and engage with them more fully? In this stage of the project, we introduced these activities to the normal programme of weekly tutorials and commentary classes for a group of first year students at Brasenose College, and sought to gather data via observation of the class and one-to-one interviews with the students.[2]

We are exploring the benefits for student learning that engaging in a creative translation activity has allowed. We are also seeking to uncover and explore some of the ways in which English students conceptualise their own disciplinary identities in relation to medieval material and to the creative act. An article, which we hope to publish this year, will consider whether creative translation activities could provide a new way for translation to function in learning that, rather than smoothing away cultural and linguistic difference, demands that students with all prior levels of language learning engage with a medieval text (and its content, form, style, and sound) as active and creative translators. As Humanities teachers and researchers, we have not adopted social scientific approaches to analysing our data. Rather, we have sought to 'close read' the transcripts of the student interviews, with a particular focus on the metaphors they used for the translation process, and the poem that they produced collectively (a response to *The Ruin*, entitled 'The Mourning After the Empire Before'). Our analysis reveals that students viewed the processes of literal and creative translation very differently, learning distinct things from each activity, and that creative translation had a valuable role to play in helping them to approach Old English poetry as literature. Engaging in the activity also prompted a conceptual shift in

[1] These college classes seek to support students in learning Old English, which they are expected to do through independent study and attendance at Faculty classes and lectures, and particularly in working through translations of the set texts in preparation for an end-of-year exam, which consists of a literary-linguistic commentary and literary essays.

[2] We have also completed a second stage of research, using similar activities and resources to teach Middle English poetry to sixth-form students in a Widening Participation event.

the students' approaches to literary translation: they moved from a position of dismissing it as a highly derivative activity, to appreciating its creative and generative potential.

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Reviews

Leonard Neidorf (ed.), *The Dating of Beowulf: A Reassessment*. Anglo-Saxon Studies 24. Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2014. x + 250 pp. Hardback. 978-1-84384-387-0. £60.00.

The Dating of Beowulf: A Reassessment comes nearly thirty-five years after the publication of the highly influential volume *The Dating of Beowulf*, edited by Colin Chase (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1981), which drew upon contributions to a conference held in Toronto in 1980. The Toronto conference and the resulting edited collection expressed a wide range of contrasting views about the date of the original composition of *Beowulf* but had the effect of paving the way for a new consensus among scholars (particularly literary scholars), which regarded the issue of dating as undecidable. The previous consensus had been for an early date for the composition of *Beowulf*, somewhere in the span 650–800, but the Toronto volume led to a period of 'dogmatic agnosticism' (in Patrick Wormald's phrase) on the whole question of the poem's dating. Such agnosticism was reinforced by the impact of Ashley Crandell Amos's *Linguistic Means of Determining the Dates of Old English Literary Texts* (Cambridge, MA: Medieval Academy of America, 1980), which came out just before the Toronto volume. Amos concluded that linguistic tests could not bring certainty to attempts to date Old English poetry. Some scholars continued to insist on an early, or earlyish, *Beowulf*, notably including, in a 2007 monograph unfortunately overlooked in the present volume, Richard North, who would place the poem in the early ninth century (specifying 826–7 as the time of the poem's composition) (*The Origins of Beowulf* [Oxford: OUP]), while others argued that the poem must come from later Anglo-Saxon England, but many decided that the question should be left open or set aside.

Agnosticism concerning the date of *Beowulf*'s composition has widely prevailed among critics down to the present. Perhaps its most categorical expression came from James Earl in 1994, who stated, 'I now consider it axiomatic that the problem of the poem's date is insoluble' (*Thinking about Beowulf* [Stanford: Stanford University Press], p. 16), but a host of critics have proceeded on the same assumption. In my own assorted comments on *Beowulf* I have tended to steer clear of the issue of the date of composition and have preferred to attend to the reception context of the poem's unique manuscript in the early eleventh century. A similar approach is evident, I see, in the excellent recent monograph by Peter S. Baker, *Honour, Exchange and Violence in Beowulf* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2013). An early date for the poem would actually suit Baker's argument but he does not engage with the issue, writing, 'For the purposes of this study it does not matter much' (p. 34).

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Instead, Baker refers to the audience of the late manuscript.

But agnosticism can surely no longer be justified. The *Reassessment* volume brings together a battery of strong contributions which taken together conclusively demonstrate that it is overwhelmingly probable that *Beowulf* was composed before about 800 and overwhelmingly improbable that it could have been composed much later (North's 820s dating might be considered to be just about possible, at the extreme end of the proposed time-frame). This book synthesizes and builds upon existing writings by Michael Lapidge, R. D. Fulk, Tom Shippey, Leonard Neidorf and others which had each argued for an early *Beowulf* by taking a specific methodological angle, palaeography in the case of Lapidge, metrics in the case of Fulk and so on. Publications by these early daters have been spiritedly critiqued by late daters and by dating agnostics but contributors to the *Reassessment* volume impressively counter these critiques and advance additional arguments in support of an early date. Throughout, the volume deploys meticulous scholarship, close reasoning and analytical rigour to reinstate convincingly the case for an early *Beowulf* and in doing so to open up the question of the dating of other undated Old English poems.

The Dating of Beowulf: A Reassessment consists of an introduction by Leonard Neidorf, followed by thirteen chapters, the last of which is an afterword by Allen J. Frantzen. The introduction presents a synthesis of the history of scholarship on the subject, noting the influence of the 1981 volume and highlighting studies of the past thirty years that have collectively 'changed the terms of the debate' (p. 16) by introducing chronologically significant evidence for an early *Beowulf* based on philology, metrics, onomastics and palaeography. Neidorf characterizes the present volume as consolidating and augmenting the efforts of these studies.

The following chapters all conclude that *Beowulf* was composed early but they use a wide range of methodological approaches in doing so. R. D. Fulk focuses on linguistic history with some reference also to metre to demonstrate the archaic nature of the language of *Beowulf* and finds it difficult to believe that the poem's archaisms could be the result of later stylistic artifice. Leonard Neidorf argues that the *Beowulf* manuscript presents a late copy of an old poem, in which the scribes show evidence of unfamiliarity of heroic names that would have been well known in the early period but not after the eighth century. Tom Shippey refers to the host of names in *Beowulf* and argues that even though many of them have no meaning for us (and often seem redundant) the poem preserves memories of real historical events and personages from a traumatic period, implying early composition. Megan E. Hartman complements Fulk's findings on archaisms, explaining that late poems such as *Judith* and *The Battle of Brunanburh* which cultivate a conservative style do so in a partial and incomplete way in contrast to the demonstrably 'genuinely' archaic diction of *Beowulf*. Thomas A. Bredehoft identifies a metrical conservatism in *Beowulf* so varied and consistent as to indicate strongly that the poem must be placed among the very earliest surviving narrative poems, 'probably in the eighth century'; Bredehoft tabulates a catalogue of metrical innovations that can be observed over the history of Old English poetry and finds that none of them features in *Beowulf*.

Moving from the 'hard' evidence of philology, palaeography and metre to

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internal considerations, Dennis Cronan notes the contrast in the treatment of Scyld in *Beowulf* and in the Alfredian and later West Saxon royal genealogies. In the latter Sceaf is privileged and Scyld 'constrained': the 'unconstrained' Scyld of *Beowulf* cannot derive from the genealogies, which suggests a pre-Alfredian milieu for the poem. Similarly, Frederick M. Biggs argues that the poem's preoccupation with the theme of royal succession suggests that *Beowulf* comes from earlier Anglo-Saxon England, when the succession of sons (which brings the danger that there may not be a suitable heir) replaced the older Germanic system according to which members of a wider kin group could succeed; such concerns would be less relevant in the later period. Joseph Harris draws attention to references, largely unnoticed by scholars, in Bede's *Ecclesiastical History*, to a place and structure in Northumbria with Hart/Heorot in its name; for Harris these references provide 'an additional piece of the puzzle' (p. 189) supporting the likelihood of an early date for *Beowulf*. T. D. Hill argues that the 'Noachite' religious world of *Beowulf* places the poem in the early period, close enough to the era of conversion for a syncretic approach to the pre-Christian world to be relevant on the part of the poet.

The final two evidence-based chapters bring us back to the harder evidence of language, metre and palaeography. Rafael J. Pascual identifies semantic shift in the history of two Old English words for monster (*scucca* and *þyrs*), from 'material' in early Anglo-Saxon England to 'spiritual' by the ninth century and end of the eighth century, respectively. And George Clark refutes the objections of Roberta Frank to Fulk's arguments for an early *Beowulf* (based on the metrics of Kaluza's law) and to Lapidge's (based on palaeography and the confusion of letter forms). Employing statistical analysis of the relevant metrical patterns and contrasting the kinds of transcription errors found in *Beowulf* with those found in texts of Cynewulf poems, particularly in the Exeter Book, Clark concludes, in support of Fulk and Lapidge, that metrically *Beowulf* 'cannot be regarded as an artful attempt to evoke a bygone era' and that the transcription errors point to an 'eighth-century poem, but with the imperfections of an eleventh-century transcription' (pp. 233, 234).

One chapter different in theme from the others is that of Michael Drout (about two-thirds of the way through the book), which steps back from questions of primary evidence to offer a penetrating analysis of the scholarly debate about dating. It presents a survey of discussions of the dating of *Beowulf* from the 1970s on and deconstructs the rhetoric of the 1981 book, which is perceived as exaggerating the amount of dissent against the eighth-century dating; Drout notes that some critics even celebrate the uncertainty about dating that became widely accepted in recent decades. And Allen Frantzen returns to questions of scholarly history in the volume's afterword. Frantzen places the debate about *Beowulf* in the context of wider developments in literary studies in the second half of the twentieth century when a preference for ahistoricizing, formalist approaches emerged, de-emphasizing specific historical context. The date of the composition of *Beowulf* matters little for such approaches, but, writes Frantzen, 'If we are concerned with a more structured kind of knowledge within the poem, the date of *Beowulf* does matter' (p. 246). Frantzen is right in seeing the chapters in the *Reassessment* as demonstrating the validity of rigorous philological and other dating criteria with respect to *Beowulf* but he looks beyond *Beowulf* to the critical

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construction of Old English verse in a diachronic rather than a synchronic pattern.

The Dating of Beowulf: A Reassessment is an exciting and substantial volume, consistently interesting, with alert individual items that cumulatively build to a powerful overall case. The discussion is lively and invariably well focused. I found myself regretting the absence of a general bibliography in such a tightly themed collection but the editing is excellent throughout and it is evident that editor and contributors engaged in fruitful dialogue in the preparation of this important book.

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M. R. Rambaran-Olm (ed.), *John the Baptist's Prayer or The Descent into Hell from the Exeter Book: Text, Translation and Critical Study*. Anglo-Saxon Studies 21. Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2014. ix + 249 pp. + ills. Hardback. 978-1-84384-366-5. £60.

This new volume in the Anglo-Saxon Studies series falls into two parts. The first is an extended introduction, including in the first chapter a discussion of the manuscript, and in chapter two analysis of the literary and theological ideas relating to Christ's descent into and harrowing of Hell. The third chapter is a literary analysis of the poem and discussion of possible sources and analogues. To complete the introduction, chapter four compares the poem more closely with treatments of the descent into Hell theme in Old English poetry and prose. The second part of the book consists of an edited text–some damaged parts of it are excitingly reconstructed using digital replication of the scribe's hand– a translation, commentary, transcription and glossary, with appendices outlining treatments of the descent into Hell motif in first-millennium Christian commentary, biblical references related to ideas in the poem, and some sources and analogues.

One of the main objects of the work is to suggest that the traditional title of the poem, *The Descent into Hell*, as in the Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records, obscures the purpose of the text, which is (according to the writer) to urge the audience to be baptised. In support of this, Rambaran-Olm points to liturgical expressions in the poem which involve the audience in response. She also suggests that the text might also have a dramatic function, similarly eliciting the participation and involvement of the audience. Overall this is perfectly plausible, but the writer tends to overstate the case for the poem not being concerned with the descent into Hell: 'the poem of the Exeter Book gives one brief line to Christ's actual entrance into Hell' (p. 55) is one of several statements of this kind. However, taken a little less dogmatically, lines 33–51 are essentially focused on Christ's 'journey' and arrival in Hell, and thus the old title is not so outlandish as the writer would like to represent it. Much of the book also focuses on discussing the motif, isolating some differences from the more conventional forms of its expression, but nevertheless confirming it as a 'descent into Hell' type of text.

The strength of this work is that it explores the biblical, patristic, theological and Anglo-Saxon background and context of Christ's descent into Hell: this was a popular and malleable idea, partly because it is so tangentially referred to or represented in Scripture. The work shows the variety of forms the motif took, and illustrates the fascination it exercised in the minds of early medieval writers. In addition to that, the work places this particular poem in a

typological and performative context, exploring how the descent can be seen as fulfilment of types in the Old Testament, how descending and ascending, dying and rising are enacted in baptism, and how (if the writer is correct in attributing the main speech in the poem to John the Baptist) the overall perfomative purpose is consonant with the message and mission of John. The range of reference to secondary literature here is wide and includes material not commonly accessed by Anglo-Saxonists.

There are, however, some weaknesses. The writing style is often repetitive and sometimes obscure. The indicated Old English vowel-length is often mistaken, as is the discussion of metrical and word-stress. Some of the quotations from English (see the quote from Garde, p. 134), Latin (the translation on p. 38 does not relate to the Latin in the text) and Old English (see the quotations on p. 77) are garbled, and many have errors.

Translations are especially problematic. The facing-page translation of the poem on pp. 147–59 is too often tendentious, and frequently odd. Quite a lot of time and effort is spent in the main text and commentary on justifying the MS *bliðne* at line 8, in the sentence, *Hæleð wæron modge / þe hy æt þam beorge bliðne fundon*, translated here as 'Dauntless were the heroes, that they found at the quiet tomb' (pp. 146–7). But no clear reason is given for retaining an accusative adjective modifying a dative noun, nor indeed is the translation of the word as 'quiet' adequately supported. In lines 62–8, the poem apparently refers to Satan's binding of many an exile (*wræccan*, accusative singular, 63) in Hell, and it gives the reassurance that none can be so closely bound (*ne bið he no þæs nearwe under niðerloc[an / to] þæs bitre gebunden under bealuclommum*, 64–5) that he cannot readily trust in God's grace and be refreshed in courage (*þe he yð ne mæge ellen habban /þonne he his hlafordes hyldo gelyfeð, /þæt hine of þam bendum bicgan wille*, 66–8). Several times in the text, however (pp. 75, 125, 129), lines 63–5 are decontextualised and taken to refer to Satan 'depicted as a wanderer, a treacherous outlaw', not closely bound and able to roam from Hell; while at another juncture (p. 83) the writer discusses Shippey's interpretation of the same passage (roughly as rendered above), without any sense of the contradiction between the two.

The book has value as a critical study, and will be informative reading on the background of the poem. For this writer it will not replace Shippey's text and translation in *Poems of Wisdom and Learning in Old English* (Boydell and Brewer, 1976), and Shippey's brief commentary is still useful alongside.

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Martin Brett and David A. Woodman (eds), *The Long Twelfth Century View of the Anglo-Saxon Past*. Studies in Early Medieval Britain and Ireland. Farnham: Ashgate, 2015. xiv + 423 pp. Hardback. 9781472428172. £85.

Emerging from a conference at Robinson College, Cambridge back in 2011, this collection of essays offers wide-ranging analyses of twelfth-century views of the Anglo-Saxon past. I use the plural advisedly here, as one of the most striking aspects of this volume is its refreshing refusal to synthesise its chapters into one narrative about the twelfth century, or indeed about the Anglo-Saxons. Brett's introduction points out that the unity of the studies lies

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in their subject matter 'and not in the conclusions they suggest, and this is itself a matter of importance' (p. 8).

The collection is divided into four broadly thematic sections. The first focuses on the twelfth-century afterlives of Anglo-Saxon saints, with work on the twelfth-century attribution of gaps in the hagiographical record to Viking attacks, and a consideration of the relatively under-studied hagiography of Folcard of St Bertin. The Anglo-Saxon period functions as an illustrious but shadowy pre-history, which can explain away gaps or inconsistencies and justify the re-foundation of monastic houses. Bede features heavily here, as you would expect, and Teresa Webber's chapter on the use of the *Historia Ecclesiastica* as a source of lections for matins in the twelfth century is especially well-researched and comprehensive.

The second section concentrates on twelfth century historiography, and the role of the Anglo-Saxon past in twelfth-century world-making projects. This part of the volume is particularly strong, as it considers Anglo-Saxon appearances in lesser-known works such as Richard of Devizes' annals alongside more familiar works by William of Malmesbury and Orderic Vitalis. The Vikings are considered again from a different perspective, and the essays span history-writing produced in both England and Normandy. The chapter by van Houts on Norman use of the Anglo-Saxons describes the Normans' saviour complex, as their historiography records that they repeatedly arrived in England to rescue the locals. One interesting theme that runs throughout these chapters is the role of the Britons in twelfth-century historiography, as the primitive peoples that the more noble and civilised Anglo-Saxons superseded. Scholars interested in history writing as a genre will find Rollason's chapter particularly valuable; he describes the twelfth-century history writing process as 'ongoing modification in the light of new material' (p. 110), suggesting that the writers edited their own and others' work in light of new discoveries.

Laws and charters provide the material for the third section, beginning with an excellent essay by Julia Crick on forged charters. With strong palaeographical detail throughout, Crick's essay makes a convincing case for archive-creation as a fundamental plank in the twelfth century's use of the Anglo-Saxon past. Vincent and O'Brien's chapters provide complementary work on the use of Anglo-Saxon charters and laws in the twelfth century, demonstrating the continuing utility and power of names such as Cnut and Edward the Confessor in establishing claims and defending hereditary rights.

The final section functions least well as a whole, although its individual chapters on art history and French vernacular texts are strong. Weiss' essay on Anglo-Norman romance and its depictions of pre-Conquest peoples stands out in the volume as the only sustained analysis of poetic texts. Of course, even a collection as capacious as this must have some areas it covers in less detail, but it would be interesting in the future to see how more poetic and literary texts would fit into some of the narratives about identity explored in this volume.

The final two essays of the volume are art-historical analyses: one close critical discussion of the Eadwine Psalter, and one extensive discussion of Anglo-Saxon features in twelfth-century architecture and sculpture. Karkov's convincing study of the Eadwine Psalter reads it as a 'self-conscious look back at and appropriation of Anglo-Saxon traditions' (p.290) translated into a

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new twelfth-century visual language and context. Her description of the manuscript imagery in the Psalter sits interestingly beside Thurlby's assertion in the final chapter that representations of architecture in Anglo-Saxon illuminated manuscripts appear to be accurate descriptions of real architectural motifs, which can then be seen in twelfth-century buildings. In what is by far the longest chapter in the volume, Thurlby gives a comprehensive survey of the state of research on Anglo-Norman architecture and sculpture, and its dependence on Anglo-Saxon archetypes.

As a whole, this collection is an important addition to the field, providing a sound building block for further work on how those in twelfth century saw their Anglo-Saxon predecessors.

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Gale R. Owen-Crocker and Brian W. Schneider (eds), *Kingship, Legislation and Power in Anglo-Saxon England*, ed. by (Publications of the Manchester Centre of Anglo-Saxon Studies, vol. 13). Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2013. xii + 306 pages. £60.00 HB. ISBN: 978-1-84383-877-7.

Kingship, Legislation and Power in Anglo-Saxon England is a collection of seven papers based on presentations given at the MANCASS Easter conference 2006 on 'Royal Authority, Kingship and Power in Anglo-Saxon England'. The volume sets out to explore the successful, effective operation of royal authority in Anglo-Saxon England, and the processes and mechanisms by which this authority was sustained. In her introduction, Ann Williams makes the case for a renewed investigation of Anglo-Saxon kingship, noting that familiarity with the topic means that it can be taken for granted by scholars of the period, and also cautioning against a reading which treats early medieval kingship only as a staging post on the route to modern versions of power and nationhood. Most papers in the volume focus on documentary sources, though a few go beyond this to examine material culture and other kinds of evidence. Together, the essays cover the whole of the Anglo-Saxon period from the sixth century to the Norman Conquest.

Part I of the volume (165 pages) is devoted to a very substantial paper, with Appendices, by Simon Keynes, based on his keynote at the Manchester conference. 'Church Councils, Royal Assemblies, and Anglo-Saxon Royal Diplomas' identifies royal assemblies as a key part of the display and maintenance of royal status, power and authority in Anglo-Saxon England, and engages with a range of important questions about their function and the processes by which they were conducted. Through the evidence of the royal diplomas associated with these assemblies (and some other documentary sources), Keynes explores the places where they were held, and the practices and business which they involved. He also raises important questions about the nature of the diploma evidence itself: in particular, whether the diplomas emanating from these gatherings were produced as a part of the assembly business, or some time after the event itself, with implications for our understanding of the processes and records of Anglo-Saxon government.

Keynes begins with a discussion of Anglo-Saxon Church Councils in the period c.670 to c.850, which he presents as important background to the development of the later royal assemblies. Through evidence from Bede and elsewhere, he deftly outlines key

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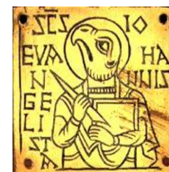

features of these Councils which connect them to the later practices of royal assemblies, including significant performative elements as well as the part played by the written word in discussion at the event and later dissemination. Keynes' analysis of the evidence for the royal assemblies themselves covers a range of important considerations, investigating the kind of business covered at these assemblies (and evidence for the recognised distinction between 'law-making assemblies' and other more general or mundane meetings), the later operation of mechanisms to connect royal assemblies with assemblies at lower and more local levels, and the development of documentary conventions associated with these practices. He notes that investigating the usual, successful functioning of kingship in Anglo-Saxon England – the professed aim of this volume – presents challenges, as the contemporary sources are, inevitably, less interested in the routine and unproblematic operation of power. Keynes' paper includes three very substantial Appendices: a list of 'Meeting-places of Royal Assemblies in Anglo-Saxon England (900-1066), with accompanying map, which revises and extends that published in the author's *Diplomas of King Æthelred*, thirty years ago; a handlist of 'Anglo-Saxon Royal Diplomas on Single Sheets (925-75); and a list of 'Citations of Anglo-Saxon Charters'. These provide a very significant, valuable reference resource for scholars working in this area.

Part II of the volume brings together a wide range of shorter papers. Alexander Rumble examines 'Anglo-Saxon Royal Archives: Their Nature, Extent, Survival and Loss', offering 'a more balanced view of the extent of the royal archives kept by and for Anglo-Saxon kings' (p. 185). While the surviving record is fragmentary, he identifies a 'pragmatic record-keeping mentality' in the pre-Conquest period, later devalued and dismissed by the Normans and still not always recognised by modern scholars. Carole Hough offers a fresh contribution to debates about the function of Anglo-Saxon lawcodes (and their purpose as either practical or symbolic) through an analysis of place-name evidence. She looks for evidence of the operation and practice of the law in place names, where she argues that the term *cyning* in charter bounds and minor place-names 'may represent forfeitures to the crown' (p. 217). Andrew Rabin's fascinating essay on 'Witnessing Kingship' asks how pre-Conquest legislation portrays the *subject*, extending our understanding of the relationship between ruler and ruled and the responsibilities of the individual. Through close analysis of the language of testimony statutes, he advances a compelling argument that, 'by the late eleventh century the subject has become a text to be written, read, and known by the law' (p. 221).

Barbara Yorke contributes a paper on 'The Burial of Kings in Anglo-Saxon England', asking what the locations of royal burials – as well as rituals and practices associated with royal tombs and burial places – can tell us about royal power, before the tenth century. Ryan Lavelle's essay nuances our understanding of the practice of itinerant kingship in Anglo-Saxon England with a reading of Ine 70.1 and a re-examination of the meaning of 'farm of one night' in the Domesday Book. The collection ends with a paper by Alaric Trousdale which tackles 'Being Everywhere at Once' and the ways in which Anglo-Saxon kings used representatives of royal authority, together with varied networks and hierarchies of power, with particular attention to the laws of King Edmund.

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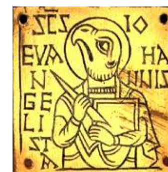

Gale Owen-Crocker's preface comments that this collection is a contribution to 'mainstream medieval history': many of the contributors deal with the often specialised documentary evidence, such as diplomas, charters and lawcodes, usually handled by historians. What, then, is there in this volume of particular interest to members of TOEBI working on the literature, language and culture of Anglo-Saxon England? There is much here which intersects with current work on the language(s) of pre-Conquest England. Hough's essay on place names has an obvious linguistic dimension, but Keynes' paper also offers new approaches to scholarly conversations about the possibility of an Anglo-Saxon 'chancery' and the potential existence of a bureaucratic context for the development of a 'Standard' Anglo-Saxon (though Keynes focuses on the Latin documents). Rabin's contribution engages in surprising and illuminating ways with theory on the body in Anglo-Saxon England (and beyond) and questions of legal subjectivity.

As the editors note, this volume focuses on 'manifestations of royal authority at its most effective' (p. x). A companion volume (now published in the British Archaeological Reports series, 2013) contains the contributions which deal instead with 'loss of authority or insecure pretensions'. This is obviously a pragmatic publishing decision and it is worthy of note that a single conference should have generated two such substantial volumes. However, there are drawbacks to this separation. In the case of this volume, our understanding of the successful functioning of Anglo-Saxon royal power would surely have been extended and nuanced by juxtaposed examples of problems, disputes, ruptures or the subversion of this authority. Such lapses and losses illuminate norms and ideals, as well as showing us what happens when they are tested. All in all, however, this is an important and useful volume which will establish itself as an important work of reference (in Keynes' essay and Appendices) and which offers interesting interpretative and thematic approaches which will undoubtedly be taken up and continued by other scholars.

Catherine A.M. Clarke
University of Southampton

TOEBI Annual Meeting 2014
University of Nottingham, 18 October 2014 – '*Opportunities*'

The 2014 TOEBI Annual Meeting was organized by Christina Lee at the University of Nottingham. During the first morning session, under the heading 'Teaching Old English: new approaches' and chaired by Christina Lee, we heard Judith Kaup (Bochum) on 'Teaching Old English Poetry: An Approach Based on Stageability' and Sara Pons-Sanz (Westminster) on 'The London Anglo-Saxon Symposium: Academic Papers for a Non-Academic Audience'. After this session, Tom Birkett (Cork) chaired a Roundtable entitled 'Unlocking the Wordhord: opportunities for Old English outside the University'. This involved lively discussion from Hana Videen, Kathryn Maude, Rebecca Hardie, Victoria Walker, Francesca Allfrey, and Francesca Brookes, and was responded to by Clare Lees (King's College London).

A tasty buffet lunch was followed by a third session on 'Interconnections with Science', chaired by Hugh Magennis (Belfast). Stefanie Künzel & Christina Lee (Nottingham) spoke on 'Bald, bacteria and (anti-)biotics: The Nottingham Research cluster on infectious disease', and James Paz

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(Manchester) presented on 'Words that Matter: Teaching Old English Literature and Science'. The final session, 'Old English in Research Projects' was chaired by Paul Cavill (Nottingham), and comprised two papers: Marilina Cesario (Belfast) spoke on 'The Signs of the Weather in Anglo-Saxon England', and Eleanor Rye (Nottingham) presented on 'Piddles and Warthills: using Old English to investigate Britain's place-names'. The Annual General Meeting (the Minutes of which can be read on the TOEBI website) concluded a very profitable and interesting day.

Reports from TOEBI Conference Award Holders 2015

50th International Congress on Medieval Studies, Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo, 14-17 May, 2015

Hana Videen (King's College London)

I travelled to Kalamazoo, Michigan, for my first International Congress on Medieval Studies. I presented my paper '"And any part of my body or spirit that may be turned aright": Blurred Boundaries of Heart and Mind in Old English poetry'. I also attended several fascinating papers on Old English topics, which I describe below.

Andrew P. Scheil (Univ. of Minnesota-Twin Cities) discussed the polysemous word *unhæl*, focussing particularly on its use in *Beowulf*, l. 120b. The word's pre-conversion meaning was something like 'whole, entire, healthy, well, sound, safe', but post-conversion its meaning was aligned more with the meanings of 'evil, damned'. Scheil argues that polysemous words in *Beowulf* play on both native and post-conversion meanings. As Craig Williamson puts it in his translation of *Beowulf*, Grendel is both 'unwhole' and 'unholy'.

Alexandra Reider (Yale) looked at Old English 'list' words, i.e., words that could have the same meaning as our modern word 'list'. Reider observes that all the words that can mean 'list' in Old English do so in their secondary and tertiary meanings—primary meanings are different but somehow related. Reider cites *getæl* as the most likely Old English word for 'list', and its primary meaning is 'a number, series, reckoning, computation', glossing Latin words like *numerus* and *computatio*. The secondary meaning of *getæl* is 'a company, race, tribe' (*centuria*, *tribus*), and it is the tertiary meaning that is 'a book of reckoning, a register, catalogue' (*catalogus*).

Jana K. Schulman (Western Michigan Univ.) discussed the relationships between fathers and daughters in OE literature. Although she cited a range of sources (saints' lives, law codes, *Beowulf*, the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, etc.), I was especially interested in her discussion of the OE *Apollonius of Tyre*, the earliest surviving romance in English. *Apollonius* gives three examples of father-daughter relationships illustrated through marriage arrangements: 1) the bad (i.e., incestuous) example of Antiochus and his unnamed, victimized daughter; 2) the example where the woman gets a say in her own marriage arrangement, Arcestrates and his daughter Arcestrate, who have a mutual respect for one another; and 3) the patriarchal example, where the father arranges his daughter Thasia's marriage to Apollonius. Schulman notes that one Old English law code (II Canute 74) actually describes the participation of the woman in decisions concerning her marriage, which is unusual in law codes and pretty much non-existent—aside from *Apollonius*—in OE literature.

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Stacy S. Klein (Rutgers) gave a paper titled 'Raising Children and Rearing Hawks in *The Fortunes of Men*'. *Fortunes*, an OE gnomic poem, deals with both parenting and parent-child separation issues. It is one of the few OE texts that depicts dual parenting and describes emotion (as opposed to just lineage). Klein argues that *Fortunes* describes parenting as an art, comparing it with the significant care and skill required in falconry. A goldsmith is lauded for his skill in shaping metal, the scop in shaping music, and the parent in shaping a child—these are all secular crafts. Klein says that there is a misconception about the importance of parenting in OE texts (i.e., that it is not all that important) because *Fortunes*, in fact, celebrates different forms of secular craft, among which most prominent is parenting.

Heidi Stoner (York)

The funding I received from TOEBI contributed towards funding my attendance at the 50th Annual International Medieval Congress, held at Western Michigan University in Kalamazoo, Michigan. This afforded me the platform to present my research to an international audience and meet with scholars whom I would not ordinarily have the chance to meet. I spoke about *The Wooden Signifiers of Kingship: text and archaeology*, highlighting the role that language and compound words in Old English can help elucidate the archaeological record of the Great Hall Complexes from Anglo-Saxon England. This will, hopefully, result in a collaborative article as a result of this conference.

The congress allowed me to hear many scholars speak that I have not had the opportunity to hear speak before, including Lisi Oliver (Louisiana State University) who has since passed away. The IMC is an essential experience for PhD Candidates and Early Career Researchers and I am grateful for the assistance that TOEBI was able to provide, as it has allowed for networking, the formation of research links, and learning about new and forthcoming research.

Margaret Tedford (Queen's University Belfast)

The bursary I received from TOEBI enabled me to attend the 50th International Congress on Medieval Studies at Kalamazoo, Michigan from the 14th-17th May 2015. I organised a panel on 'Discourses of Memory: Medieval Perspectives on the Past' in which I also gave a paper on depictions of 'historical' sites in Old English literature.

The conference provided an opportunity to meet a large number of Anglo-Saxonists from across the world and was a forum for a great deal of discussion. In particular, the Richard Rawlinson Center for Anglo-Saxon Studies and Manuscript Research organised three linked sessions, two of which focused on Bede. There was also a discussion on the state of contemporary Anglo-Saxon studies in a panel organised by the Old English Forum of the MLA.

Stefanie Künzel (Nottingham)

The TOEBI Conference Award helped to fund my participation in the Fiftieth International Congress on Medieval Studies held in Kalamazoo.

I presented a paper as part of the session 'Bodies that Matter I: Miracles, Manuscripts, and Medicine' sponsored by the University of Nottingham's Institute for Medieval Research. Based on the research I

am currently undertaking for my PhD dissertation, the paper explores conceptualisations of disease in Anglo-Saxon England while bringing together Medieval Studies with theoretical and methodological insights from the field of Cognitive Linguistics.

This was the first time I participated in a large-scale international conference and I am very grateful for the opportunity to meet numerous established specialists working on the subjects of health, disease and healing in the Middle Ages and beyond.

MANCASS Easter Conference 2015 – 'Manhood in Anglo-Saxon England'

Eleni Ponirakis (Nottingham)

Having spent the first year of my PhD working on *The Battle of Maldon* I was thrilled to see that the topic of this year's MANCASS conference was on Anglo-Saxon manhood; when I received an e-mail informing me that my proposed paper had been accepted I felt both exhilarated and daunted at the thought of presenting my work to such a distinguished audience.

I am very grateful to TOEBI for their generous contribution towards conference expenses, not only because the financial support was very welcome, but also because knowing that the TOEBI committee had confidence in me had much the same effect as Ælfwine's rallying cry - *nu mæg cunnian hwa cene sy*!

The conference itself was a wonderful experience. The papers were fascinating, and embraced a broad range of expertise from osteo-archaeology to architecture. I found myself in stimulating company on the *Maldon* panel and learned a good deal about other aspects of the context of the battle and contemporary attitudes to Byrhtnoth. Discovering that this panel was to be chaired by none other than Professor Donald Scragg was a privilege I could not have imagined.

The conference lasted two days, during which I learned a great deal, listening to a wealth of inspiring presentations and enjoying the company of experts who previously had been names on my bibliography and were now sharing their ideas with me firsthand over a pint. It was one of the most memorable experiences of my studies. My paper was very well received and instigated some lively debate, which was very satisfying. The most valuable part of the experience, however, was meeting so many interesting people, several of whom have stayed in touch - and what a delight to see some of them in Leeds this week. Thank you TOEBI, *sinces brytta* and *goldwine gumena*.

International Medieval Congress, Leeds, 6th-9th July 2015

Kathryn Maude (King's College London)

Thank you to TOEBI for helping to fund my trip to the IMC this year. I spoke about the saints' lives of the nuns of Barking and my paper focused on how Goscelin of St Bertin adapted the sources in Bede's Ecclesiastical History. I also chaired a session on Anglo-Saxon Misreadings with Hana Videen, Victoria Walker and Rebecca Hardie. Finally, I spoke on a roundtable entitled New Directions in the Study of Women Religious, bringing an Anglo-Saxonist's perspective to the table! I was also able to attend a masterclass in academic publishing at the conference, which was very useful.

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Changing Faces

Gale Owen-Crocker handed over the Directorship of the Manchester Centre for Anglo-Saxon Studies to Dr Charles Insley in August 2014 and is retiring from her position as Professor of Anglo-Saxon Culture at the University of Manchester on 31 January 2015. Dr James Paz has been appointed to a lectureship at the University of Manchester from September 2014.

Please send any information about recent / upcoming appointments or retirements in your department to either of the Editors, and encourage your new colleagues to become members of TOEBI. Application forms can be downloaded from the website.

Contribute to the Newsletter:

Responses to any of the items in this issue; book reviews; short articles on your Old English courses or assessment procedures; material about professional practice.

Please send information about the following items:

- conferences on Anglo-Saxon studies
- special lectures by Anglo-Saxonists
- postgraduate courses and opportunities in Old English
- news about promotions, or general news about Old English lecturers
- the publication of new books or articles useful for teaching Old English
- useful websites for teaching Old English

Please recycle me

If you have a print-out of the TOEBI Newsletter, why not pass it on to a colleague who is not a member, or one of your graduate students? Better still, leave it in the staff common area so that other faculty members can find out what goes on in the world of Old English studies.

Send submissions for the next Newsletter to the Editors:

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